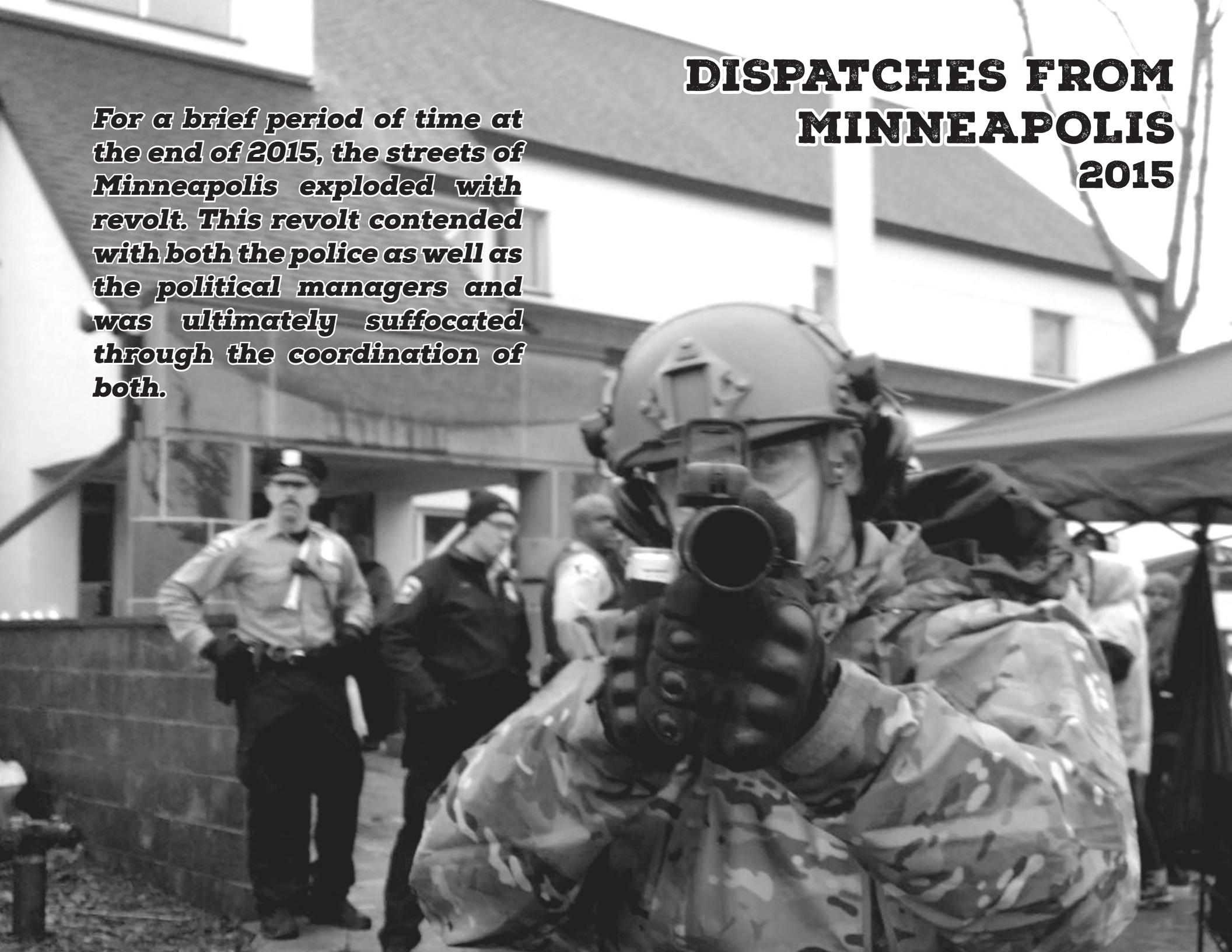


DISPATCHES FROM MINNEAPOLIS 2015

For a brief period of time at the end of 2015, the streets of Minneapolis exploded with revolt. This revolt contended with both the police as well as the political managers and was ultimately suffocated through the coordination of both.



For more counter-information out of the Twin Cities check out:

CONFLICT MN

<https://conflictmn.blackblogs.org/>

Other texts distributed at the 4th Precinct occupation:

Another Word For White Ally Is Coward

Can be found at Anti-State STL

<https://antistatestl.noblogs.org/post/2015/08/21/another-word-for-white-ally-is-coward/>

What They Mean When They Say Peace

Can be found at CrimethInc.

<http://www.crimethinc.com/blog/2014/08/18/what-they-mean-when-they-say-peace/>

The Making Of "Outside Agitators"

Can be found at CrimethInc.

<http://www.crimethinc.com/blog/2014/08/20/the-making-of-outside-agitators/>

You Can't Shoot Us All

Can be found at Unfinished Acts.

<https://unfinishedacts.noblogs.org/you-cant-shoot-us-all/>

DISPATCHES FROM MINNEAPOLIS

second edition

SUMMER 2016

DISPATCHES FROM MINNEAPOLIS

On the 15th of November 2015, Jamar Clark was shot by a Minneapolis police officer in the early hours of the morning. A variety of factors, most notably the allegation from witnesses that Clark was handcuffed at the time of the shooting, led to a significant outcry on social media calling for justice. Very quickly a press conference and protest was called for by the NAACP at the location of the shooting.

The shooting took place James & Plymouth Ave in North Minneapolis, a predominantly black neighborhood of the city. In 1967, Plymouth Ave was the scene of a so-called race riot, where black insurgents battled police for multiple nights as they looted and burned stores. In 2002, another police shooting set off a riot in North Minneapolis when residents attacked police and burned media vehicles at the scene. Earlier this year it was designated as a federal “promise zone” which is aimed at spurring economic development, one of eleven in the country. Also on this list is St. Louis County.

November 15th

Throughout the duration of the NAACP's press conference, small interruptions took place as people that appeared to be residents of the block were upset at the invasion of activists and media into their home. While activists chanted or sang for the cameras, neighbors observed it as the spectacle it was, and often interjected that singing didn't change things, or that the activists were just "playing games." In spite of, or even because of this tension, activists usually spoke of their actions as those of "the community." This tension, palpable from the beginning, would continue for some time.

After the press conference wrapped up, people gathered at the intersection of James & Plymouth for a march. People held hands and stood blocking the street on both ends of the block. This was declared to be a "no cop zone," although only symbolically. It's worth noting that there was almost no police presence, a fairly common strategy for de-escalation. The march then started moving west toward the nearby MPD precinct. Once there, speakers addressed the crowd once more. At one point, a brick was hurled at the building.

As the sun set, people discussed what to do next. Some were very adamant about marching to some event nearby where the Mayor and Police Chief would be. Others intended to stay at the precinct, supposedly to pressure the officers inside to do something. Both occurred, some marched to the Mayor while others occupied the vestibule of the precinct. Late into the night, a side entrance to the building was also blocked while people threw bottles at police and sabotaged their vehicles.



Downed surveillance camera, November 18th

December 2nd

It was a somber night at the camp, with most people knowing that the raid would happen soon. Like the days before, there had been rumors swirling the camp for days that the cops were going to evict the camp the night of the 2nd, although as the night went on, they became more and more credible. Some fiery literature was distributed to hopefully raise some of that fighting spirit that had been such a force a couple of weeks earlier. The icy-grip of the “leadership” was total; the message around the camp was “We stand together, we stand in peace.” Close to 4am the police moved in and quickly destroyed the occupation and made several arrests. Everyone was released shortly after.

For now, it seems this wave of revolt has passed. Even after it was announced that the officers who were involved in Jamar Clark's murder were not going to be charged, community organizations had honed their pacification techniques, solidifying their control over potential unrest.

As this chapter closes, it is crucial that we revisit our tactics and strategies, what worked and what didn't, in hopes that the next time we are better prepared to resist the diverse forces of order.



November 16th

To the surprise of many, those camped in the precinct's vestibule were not arrested or evicted by the police. The occupation grew, with tents and a fire pit sprouting up throughout the day.

In the evening, people took to the streets once again, this time to take over a freeway. 94W was blocked for over an hour, as police facilitated drivers stuck in traffic onto the closest exit. One driver plowed through the crowd, which resulted in a short brawl between angry protesters and the police trying to protect the vehicle. Eventually the police gave a final warning to those blocking the freeway and those not comfortable with offering themselves up for arrest left. A spontaneous march then took place, back to the occupied precinct.

Even given the impromptu and unorganized nature of the late march, Black Lives Matter marshals remained in control. Directing traffic, regulating how many lanes we were allowed to take up; "ensuring everyone's safety," as they say. These protest marshals have been a constant feature of actions put on by Black Lives Matter and other similar organizations, and most of the time can be recognized by their yellow vests. The marshals are tasked with keeping the crowd under control and de-escalating situations in the street. These marshals act as a (possibly unconscious) extension of the police, who no longer need to be present in large numbers.

In this way, these activist groups are policing the neighborhood in a way that the uniformed cops were unable to do. This is one of the most fundamental aspects of counter-insurgency doctrine, also known as community policing. When the legitimacy of the police is undermined—as it is in the aftermath of high profile police shootings—trusted community organizations step in to police the population. In this case, Black Lives Matter, the NAACP, NOC, and a number of other groups keep everyone in line so the Minneapolis Police Department can avoid direct confrontations which would escalate what were passive protests at the moment into potential riots. Without these groups organizing and containing the demonstrations, the police would have to deal with the unpredictable activity of those angered by the shooting, and have nothing but brute force to handle it.

In one attempt to counter these efforts, the following flyer was distributed along the march on the 16th:

You've probably heard the chant NO JUSTICE NO PEACE, but what does it mean?

NO JUSTICE: Justice is a vague word. For some people, justice can mean arresting or prosecuting killer police officers. Others aren't satis-

fied by this—believing that the entire system is either broken or even designed for the purpose of maintaining white supremacy. No matter how we define justice, odds are if we're chanting this, we don't have it.

NO PEACE: Until we get justice, *they* will get no peace. 'They' can be understood as the police, as the politicians and officials, perhaps capitalists, or all of those who maintain this system of white supremacy, of patriarchy, and capitalism. These are the people that will receive no peace. Which begs the question why this is often chanted while being peaceful? If we wish to receive justice, however we define it, we won't receive it by peaceful means. The police want more than anything to preserve control—and this is the same task as those who are tasked with de-escalating and marshaling the crowd. In response to this, we must become *uncontrollable*

...otherwise we're just playing games.

Late into the night, Jamar Clark was taken off of life-support, and pronounced dead.

November 17th

Anticipating potential anger over the announcement of Jamar's death, Black Lives Matter calls for "healing spaces" at the precinct on Tuesday night. The occupation continues.

November 18th

Early in the afternoon, a SWAT team raided the occupation of the 4th precinct's vestibule. For the next several hours, the occupiers and their supporters rallied in front of the station that was now blocked off by police.

The scandal, according to many activists, was that this raid took place while the Mayor was meeting with the so-called "leaders" of the protest. The problem here is twofold: we must not negotiate in any way with those in power, and we must not put anyone in a leadership position to do so. There should be no interest in meeting with the Mayor, nor should the absence of select individuals be debilitating to an action.

People began to surround the building and blockade all entrances the precinct. As the night progressed, police attempted to regain ground by making sudden charges only to retreat just as quickly. These maneuvers often included mace and marker rounds, and prompted objects to be thrown from the crowd, although just as many felt obligated to deride their fellow demonstrators with chants of "peaceful protest." Large tarps were fixed to the fences at the side entrances in order to block the view of the police as well as impede their "less lethal" weapons.

The blockade of the police station is significant because it attempted to

The following text was handed out in both english and spanish along the march route:

Solidarity With The Northside Rebellion

This past week, rebels on the Northside have shown us what it means to resist police violence. After the tragic shooting of Jamar Clark, who may very well have been handcuffed when he was executed by the cops, people marched on the 4th precinct before occupying it. They set up tents, a kitchen, and more before the police tried to kick them out. In response, the entire building was blockaded and all police assaults were met with bottles, rocks, and other means. Since then, the occupation has continued to grow in front of the 4th precinct, even in the face of attacks by police and white supremacists.

Their actions inspire us. But we are not satisfied to sit passively and applaud their actions, we know that being in solidarity means we must spread the revolt. Police are violent everywhere, and so we must resist them everywhere. The occupation in the Northside has proven once again is that we don't need the police. All sorts of different people have come together and been fed, clothed, given shelter and more.

They want us to go home and to return things to normal. But normal for them is another black person shot dead by the cops every day across the country.

Unfortunately, back on the Northside, the organizations fill the days with meetings and workshops. Their constant presence is at least partially to ensure the implementation of their new rules. The next several days are fairly calm.

November 30th

The Mayor, along with city officials and others—including politicians who were close to the leadership—called for the occupation to end. This laid the political groundwork for an impending eviction, rumors of which began cropping up that evening. This night, the police began staging for an eviction, which spurred an emergency call out for solidarity. This was likely an attempt by police to wear people down, as they made no attempt to proceed with the eviction that night.

Later in the evening, suspected white supremacists once again shot at the occupation, but this time, someone was prepared to return fire. Since that night, white supremacists have not returned, at least not out of uniform.

Since their first appearance, the language of “agitators” has been used to describe them (as opposed to their political position as white supremacists), which has lent itself very conveniently to the policing of protest. Instead of being collectively against those hostile to the occupation, a paranoia began to spread, casting aspersions on anyone who looked like they possessed the potential to act of their own accord. Since “agitators” in general were considered the problem, militants who refused to be pacified were considered to be equally dangerous as the ones who shot at us.

November 26th

Thousands gather for Thanksgiving and share food at the precinct. During the day, a few officers were invited out for food and drinks as a photo-op. Some participants who booed the police were swiftly denounced by activists for being “violent.” Even a pathetic chant of “No justice, no peace, prosecute the police” is shouted down.

Later that night, after most people have left, new rules of conduct for the occupation are hammered out in a closed meeting before being announced by Black Lives Matter on Facebook. People at the occupation are not allowed to engage the police nor in “gang activities,” and any form of violence or property destruction is prohibited. All attempts at policing from the supposed leadership have been crystallized in these rules.

November 27th

In South Minneapolis, several dozen march in a solidarity demonstration with the Northside uprising. A sound truck blasting anti-police hip hop followed the group the length of a major commercial artery during rush hour on Black Friday. The reception on the street was of enthusiastic support. Everyone was excited to take one of several hundred handouts that was written to explain the march, and many joined a long the way. While small, this is the first autonomous demonstration to take place throughout this entire sequence. The domination of street actions by community organizations lead many to be suspicious of any call-out that does not provide the name of an organizing body. This demonstration could have been step towards the proliferation of autonomous actions that rendered the supposed leadership irrelevant.

make real what has only been symbolically declared just a few days ago: a no-cop zone, in the strictest understanding of policing as a job. Not only were police prevented from leaving the station or changing shifts, officers began to run out of supplies such as water bottles throughout the course of the night. It was not much later that allegedly some of the leadership organizations agreed to leave the east side of the precinct alone, effectively breaking the potential of the blockade.

It’s notable that the building has not always housed the MPD precinct. This would explain its vulnerabilities, the relative ease with which the station was occupied and later blockaded. The west side of the precinct did not even have a single surveillance camera, which was made up for by a mobile camera tower erected a few days earlier. This camera was eventually toppled and used to barricade the west entrance.

As more marker rounds were fired at the crowd, they were met with more volleys bottles and rocks. Pleas for peace went ignored as bricks were broken up and hurled over the fence at the cops. A dumpster from the alley was dragged out to ensure an escape route, but too wet from the rain to ignite. The street fighting continued for hours, as bricks were thrown from behind cars while dodging the rounds fired by the police. As the crowd thinned out, multiple molotov cocktails were launched at the cops.

Very quickly, many activists laid the blame on “white anarchists” for the violence, something the police chief picked up on the next day for her press conference. This erases the fact that many people who fought the police were black, and whose political affiliations could not easily be determined. Most militants appeared to be from the neighborhood, unlike the activists telling them what is or isn’t acceptable forms of resistance. However it is also likely that some of the rioters were also from other neighborhoods, cities, or even states. It is important not to legitimize the outside agitator rhetoric by responding with facts to the contrary, but to recognize that it is currently the simplest tool for the pacification of revolt.



The next day, the following piece was circulated online and in print amongst the camp:

On Throwing Rocks, or Thoughts on the Demonstration at the 4th Precinct in Minneapolis, Minnesota on 11/18

[T]he time of passive resistance has ended, that nonviolence was a useless strategy and could never overturn a white majority regime bent on retaining its power at any cost” – Nelson Mandala

“Y'all are some singers. Y'all are just like them, you're all cops.” – A man at Sunday's demonstration at the 4th Precinct.

As the cloud of mace lifted, the same calls for “peaceful protest!”—converted later into a chant—were heard above the thronging panicked crowd. Indignant rants of fury against violence would follow. But what does this righteous rage against “undeserved violence” and “unaccountable police work” presuppose? That there is deserved violence and accountable police work. What does this accountable, correct use of violence look like for a police force tasked with protecting the given distribution of power in a country like the United States, a country founded on the violence of dispossession and slavery; a country kept alive by vicious colonial expansion abroad and precise mechanisms of internalized normality at home? We got to see both sides of this power operation last night when the *essential* violence of the cops was met with the injunction to be peaceful by many of the protesters.

But who defines what “violence” is? And who decided that being “peaceful” was not only the best strategy, but the only possible one? In short, the cops did, but the cops conceived as a mechanism. The police are really nothing other than a mechanism for neutralizing threats to the state’s monopoly on violence, a monopoly that includes the authority to define it. Hence the activists’ repeated claims that *they* can police their neighborhoods. They’re right, and in this sense, the angry man at Sunday’s demonstration was entirely correct. The consequences of this “community policing” became immediately obvious when they physically excluded his body and voice by forming a circle and singing over him.

Let us not forget COINTELPRO’s expressed aims in the 60’s: “Prevent violence on the part of black nationalist groups. This is of primary importance.” And what was their fear concerning a so-called “black messiah?” That he “abandon his ‘obedience’ to ‘white, liberal doctrines’ (nonviolence).” Thus, when protesters, and especially the activists, declare their

media, to use the word terrorism to describe the attack.

The “protest leadership” in Minneapolis—the NAACP, the Black Lives Matter leaders, non-profit NOC with Democratic Party ties, with a significant amount of overlap between these groups—has reacted to the shooting the same way the state reacts to terrorism. The calls for unity, the security measures that are supposed to keep us safe but actually do just the opposite. For example, it’s been called for that people are not supposed to wear masks anymore at the 4th Precinct. But wearing masks is a way to hide one’s identity from the police and surveillance apparatus, which is crucial to any serious form of resistance. Of course, we know that the leadership is dedicated to making sure that no resistance ever becomes serious. People are quick to point out potential “agitators” or “troublemakers” for expulsion with little evidence. This is clearly a police operation designed to remove militants under the guise of protecting the camp from white supremacists.

If it’s not terrorism, then what is it? Civil war. There is not a ninety nine percent of us that needs to be enlightened by the proper literature or media coverage, there are people who want to uphold white supremacy and those who want to destroy it. And on the night of the 23rd, those two groups came together to experience conflict, only attenuated by the self-designated marshals restraining people. On the night of the 24th, there was another shooting by suspected white supremacists as well, but this time someone returned fire. As conflict across the world escalates, this will happen more and more. And it’s certainly not glamorous; if there’s one thing I learned from almost getting shot, it’s that I’d prefer not to do it again. But I’m not sure that’s going to be an option.

The shooting galvanized the leadership to drop their plans for leaving the precinct, and instead called for resilience.

November 24th

Over a thousand came to a march from the occupation to downtown and causing rush hour gridlock before returning to the precinct for a concert put on by the NAACP. The march was reminiscent of any liberal demonstration, or perhaps more accurately, parade. Chants of “fuck the police” re-emerged as night fell, but stopped short of anything more.

Back at the occupation, an angry young man hopped the police barricade in front of the building’s entrance during the concert and was arrested. After no one said anything on the microphone about it, the concert was disrupted until someone on stage was forced to acknowledge that there had been an arrest—but not without placing the blame on the person arrested.

A few days after, the following first-person account and analysis was published of the shooting.

Conflict in Minneapolis: Terrorism and Civil War

The night of the 23rd, white supremacists shot at people who chased them out of the 4th Precinct occupation in Minneapolis. Later that night, on the advice of a friend, I wrote the following:

When they walked up to the precinct, they acted off. Aloof. One was taking video. There's no way to easily describe their demeanor but it was certainly hostile. I whispered to the people next to me that I thought those were the white supremacists but I didn't know for sure. I approached behind perhaps a dozen others to confront them. I picked up a stick of firewood, to use as a bat if it came to that. People asked them what they were about. One said they were here for Jamar. I could have sworn he stuttered as he looked at one of the banners hung next to him to make sure he said the right name. The one filming said they were trying to spread the cause. People didn't buy it. Some folks were being physically restrained by others. One in an SEIU hat held back the crowd. We were not allowed to be the aggressors against this group that had been peaceful. The four had their hands up in surrender and were pressed up against the fence when they decided to leave. People followed. Most people were willing to throw down, but some yelled for calm. One of the four got socked in the face. Most people stopped a quarter of the way up the block, where you could still see the precinct through the parking lot on the corner. I wanted to follow and maybe get their plates. I walked up the block, but others ran ahead of me. Then. POP POP POP POP POP. I don't know what it is at first. But then I see the muzzle flash. Then I hear it whiz by me. Then I duck, lunging behind the closest car for cover. This is the same move I made last week one block away when the cops shot less-lethal rounds at us. But these weren't. While dodging behind cars, I hear someone scream for help. I call out for folks to help them, then I run back to the camp.

After the shooting, one primary reaction [on behalf of protesters] was for it to be labelled terrorism. And that's understandable, from a certain point of view. Making it clear that what the state does and doesn't call terror shows that it's completely political in nature. Terrorism is defined by how it is used, which is as an instrument of the state. That which is terrorism is that which threatens the state's power. This would explain why white supremacist attacks are not met with the same level of repression, especially compared to anti-police rebellion. Most of the time, however, people remain simply indignant on the double-standards of the word's use. Some even appear desperate that the state recognize them, with the seemingly endless calls for the government, as well as the

own righteous peaceful purity, they do so only by excluding the hooded ones near the back who chose to throw water bottles, stones, bricks, and trash cans at the police macing us. Is it really surprising that, after the cops clearly retreated while being pelted with stones, the activists still present the self-congratulatory and yet self-victimizing image of the pacifist protester? When activists make calls to "prosecute the police" and to "have black cops in our neighborhoods," they are merely expressing rage at the most flamboyant aspects of a fluid power dynamic that systematically colonizes abroad and at home. They just want to pretty it up. As a 16 year old yelled at the black cop who came to replace a white cop: "fuck you too, you can go home as well."

When activists declare that the stone throwing was merely a reaction to the violence of the police and assure the media that it was quickly quelled, they rob the event of its plurality and exclude those "who don't get it," who "were raised differently," or who "strongly reacted." It doesn't matter what race the person is saying it is, this is colonial logic that de facto excludes any form of resistance that doesn't appeal to the police, the state, and the media. It implicitly, through its own violent exclusion of the resistance of others, supports the world as it is. It is reactionary. "In its simplest form this nonviolence signifies to the intellectual and economic elite of the colonized country that the bourgeoisie has the same interests as they." (Frantz Fanon) And when they declare that this violence will only provoke the police into attacking us (or even imply that those hit with marking bullets brought it upon themselves) this legitimizes the violence of the police, while delegitimizing the violence of the kids throwing bottles. Thus, again, activists show themselves to be doing the work of the police.

What is forgotten every time a well-meaning activist calls for peace in the face of rock throwing at a demonstration is that they are deciding, again, that *they* are the ones who get to define what violence is and where it begins. For them, disrupting a highway is not violence, but throwing a bottle is violence; blocking police inside their station (physically stopping bodies' ability to move) is nonviolent, whereas slashing tires is violent; and, of course, physically and verbally excluding those who have a different idea of what violence is, in the most spectacular reversal yet, not violence, but telling a cop you'll "beat his ass right now" is violent. Later, the activists play hero because of their own "bravery in the face of arrest or police violence" while again imploring those who also took risks by throwing stones (but perhaps didn't want to throw their bodies into an ineffective gesture), to "stop their violence." Again,

the enlightened elite—the religious leaders, activists, and intellectuals—both black and white, know what's best for people who just don't understand what needs to happen. They don't get it that their *real solution* won't come from self-determined revolt, but from [Insert here: Appeals to the media/Peaceful demonstration/Socialism/Anarchism/Pan-Africanism/martyrdom].

This is not a call for unrestrained and random violence. This is not a call from a hardened militant. This is a call to respect the diversity of tactics, and the self-determinate violence that *already exists* on the streets, to the shame of the professional activists. This is a call for plurality and coordination in a decisive time.

- Someone standing in the back

November 19th

Despite the eviction of those in the vestibule, the occupation of the precinct's lawn continued to grow, with a couple hundred gathering in response to Black Lives Matter's call for a mass occupation in the evening. People gathered around fire-pits, and handed out donated pizzas as well as warm clothing. As tempting as it would be to call it an autonomous space, the reality was that even with the uniformed officers idling behind the barricades, it was still densely policed by marshals, activists and the abundance of cameras. Several elected officials were invited and spoke to the crowd, hoping to soothe any rebellious tensions still present from the previous night.

They were not entirely successful, as the precinct was decorated by multiple graffiti writers. One activist yelled to the police about it, which was followed by more marker rounds being shot into the occupation. Two men were later arrested, accused of being the vandals, but the charges were not filed at the time.



November 23rd

After a relatively calm couple of days, things heated up very quickly when a small group of masked men entered the camp, filming it. A few days earlier, armed white supremacists had briefly walked through the camp and made threats online. In this earlier group, someone recognized one of them and exposed his identity all over the internet. Making this clear connection to the earlier encounter, dozens quickly confronted the group, determined that they were indeed hostile, and forced them out. A few marshals tried to prevent an all out brawl as the white supremacists ran away. When people ran after them, the white supremacists opened fire, wounding five. Thankfully, everyone survived.

The police arrived soon after and secured the area, at least for their own purposes. They took their time letting an ambulance in and maced those attempting to reach the injured, while taunting the crowd by saying "this is what you asked for." Despite the past weeks—not to mention the past centuries—many in the crowd still approached the police for help apprehending the shooter. If we haven't learned this lesson yet: the police are not an entity for which the goal of protecting and serving is corrupted by a few bad apples or policies. They are the enemies of anyone fighting for liberation. As such, they will not help us nor do we want their help.



Matter had agreed to disband the occupation, or at least move it elsewhere where it would not contain such potential for conflict. A statement was prepared for distribution at a march scheduled for the 24th that criticized the organization's decision, although new developments meant that the plan was abandoned and the following statement was never circulated:

Do Politician Lives Matter More Than Black Lives?

After meeting with several elected officials, Black Lives Matter now wants to call off "their" occupation. They seem to feel that being recognized by those in power is sufficient grounds for terminating any potential offensive capacity in the occupation. The camp that grew in front of the 4th precinct represented a *revolutionary* potential, something that threatened the status quo of white supremacy that the police are tasked with maintaining. To give this up would be to hand the territory back to the police, with which they would not simply return to normal but they will make sure that nothing like this is ever possible again. Those who rebelled will be hunted down, and the neighborhood will be policed with even more intensity than before. We took space for ourselves and built a new form of life—this is what those in power fear. This fear has brought them to the bargaining table with the so-called leaders of the movement. And if we want to put an officer behind the bars of the prison industrial complex, then there might be room to negotiate. If we want to abolish this white supremacist system, then there is nothing they can offer us. Even if we want demands to be met, they haven't been. Black Lives Matter would have us pack up and leave whenever it suites their agenda. The truth is that they are afraid. Black Lives Matter finds their common ground with the city in their fear of our newfound autonomy. We don't need leadership, and we don't need their organizations to make decisions for us, to tell us when to go home.

- the underwear in a bottle of ortega salsa¹

As the activist groups struggle to regain control of the movement, it seemed as if their legitimacy has been irreparably damaged in the eyes of those interested in fighting against the systems of oppression, however that optimism would later turn out to be unfounded.

As mentioned earlier, the language of "community" was used as a tool for pacification by the protest leadership and the authorities. During a few days of calm at the occupation, the following text was published and, like the previous one, distributed in print at the fourth precinct.

The Clash of "Communities;" the State of the Occupation at the 4th Precinct

"A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language." – Frantz Fanon

Ok, let's take a look at this mess:

- "Together as a community we are going through something no community wants to face together... It is the dignity of neighborliness, the dignity of community, it is the dignity of the city of Minneapolis... It is that strength that will carry us through as a community...My vision is that we catalyze this moment for peace...that we strengthen the bonds of our communities with police and with each other." (Mayor Hodges)
- "All different types of people from the community are protesting." (Comment on Twitter)
- "Earlier on Friday, Minnesota governor Mark Dayton met with Minneapolis mayor Betsy Hodges, NAACP leaders, the commissioner of the department of public safety and other officials to discuss measures such as community policing." (From an article in the Guardian)
- "Community has been up all night." (From the Black Lives Matters Twitter)
- "Tensions between black community, Minneapolis police resurface after fatal shooting." (Title of an article in the Star Tribune)
- "Augsburg college and its students are a part of the Minneapolis community and have been affected by the homicide of Jamar Clark, lack of police accountability, and structural racism and targeting and harming communities of color." (Augsburg ADSG)
- "It seems to me, you all don't want help from the white community." (Comment on Twitter)

Wait, what? I'm sorry, but communities inside of communities inside of what community? The Minneapolis community, the black community, the north side community, the white community: is community

1. The police tweeted pictures of supposed "molotov cocktails" they had confiscated from the occupation. Among other absurd combinations, a plastic bottle of ortega salsa with children's underwear stuffed in it as a wick was documented.

a place, an attribute, or something else? Regardless of our own confusion at the occupation, the city and police certainly know already. On the insidempd website, there is a section titled “Community.” Under that heading are the sub-headings “Crime Prevention,” “Investigative Crime Mapping,” “City and Precinct Crime Statistics,” “Policies and Procedures Manual,” and “Chaplains and Chiefs Council.” Community, for the city, is first of all an activity, not a static group of people. But what is that activity? Clearly, lawful self-management, or, in other words, self-policing. Community is an operation, laden with moral overtones, to attempt to cause policing as an activity to proliferate. And, as anyone at the 4th precinct on Friday could see, it must be working quite well since two groups nearly came to fists over the idea—a tame one—that someone might burn the American flag. We need to drop the idea that the police are merely here to repress us. They repress us like the shepherd represses sheep: sure, he blocks their potential movement with fences and guard dogs, but he encourages them to move and intermingle within the prescribed area. This injunction to “live! But live the right way!” is reflected in the petitions directed at the police to “see how peaceful we were being” when we were maced, or in the Augsburg ADSG’s recent demand to “provide community oversight of the police with full disciplinary power” and to “require that officers live in the communities in which they serve.” Community, here, is an extra-juridical term, a super-policing term used to transform the abstract Law into a moral category. This is the community of priests, the Priests of Order that creates its blessed ones and its pariahs every time someone tells a 16 year old that he’s “hurting the movement” when he throws a bottle. A lot of the confusion on the ground is a result of wanting to think “community” as either a place or as the hypostatized version of an attribute. If it’s the first, that means that without anything happening, we could enter or exit “the community” like a building or a park, which would be meaningless. If it’s the second, that means that regardless of what that group is doing, it forms a community, so that, if, for example, all the poor and disenfranchised Irish immigrants in 19th century New York City were put in isolation chambers and kept from interacting, their merely “being Irish” would still make them a community. But there’s really no reason to resort to philosophical abstractions: let’s say they all worked full time in increasingly micro-managed and diversified factories and lived in single family apartment units. Would they still form a “working class Irish community?” Unfortunately, I think the police are ahead of us on this question. They know that “community” has no substance outside of the relations and connections between people.

The word itself comes from the Latin “communitatem” meaning “fellowship of relations or feelings.” Relations or feelings, these are what is held in common in a time of action. There is no “Community” that just is and that is finally coming out to demonstrate as if out of its cave. There is only community happening or “being built” as Unicorn Riot said on one of their Twitter posts.

In the end, there is no “Community” except as a meaningless abstraction. Let us drop this confusing term. Our tie to it is moral and not strategic. It transforms the dynamic relations between words and bodies into a mass of static bodies and “statements” removed from context. There are only communities (in the plural) flowing in and out of each other, forming conscious and subconscious bonds, exchanging words and telling stories, building fires and barricades, blocking police and policing others, throwing rocks and snitch-jacketing. There are the communities of friends and accomplices that blend in and out of each other seamlessly; and there are the communities of police doing the same. This strategic intelligence already exists outside the 4th precinct, but it exists, paradoxically, side-by-side with the moral language of a church of radicalism that breaks the essential bonds being built in our actions. This logic of sadness is the logic of pictures and theory, or, the logic of death and dead things.

So, yes, communit(ies) continue to be built at the occupied 4th Precinct. The absurdity of the claim that “police from our own communities should police us” becomes more obvious day after day as we see the confusion around “community” come to a head. Let’s be clear: there are no “police” outside of the “policing communities.” We not only don’t need the police—this is obvious—our own “leaders” are the ones responsible for personally reproducing it as a moral necessity at the occupation. Down with the horrible monster, Community! Long live the communities!

“In the World through which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself.”
– Frantz Fanon

- A pariah of The Community

After the inspiring actions of the 18th, various organizations doubled down on their efforts to lay claim to the occupation and pacify those holding it down. Politicians, clergy and the like made regular appearances at the camp. The graffiti was removed, and the police were biding their time, hoping the protest would fizzle out on its own.

Which indeed it might have. By the 23rd, rumor spread that Black Lives